

Abstract 645

TITLE: Positive Voices! Positive Choices! HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Project

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ISSUE: Prevention education must be realistic and delivered using successful methodologies that consider the target audiences. Adolescent audiences are especially difficult to reach unless the strategy addresses their developmental and educational level.

SETTING: Middle school, high school, and college classrooms; community based agencies that serve adolescents and their families

PROJECT: To address the need for effective HIV/AIDS prevention education for adolescents and young adults, the Positive Voices! Positive Choices? HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Project provides original skills based curriculum through customized classroom presentations delivered by HIV positive persons who have been extensively trained to interact with adolescents in the classroom setting. Skills such as decision-making, refusal, delaying and negotiation are introduced, demonstrated and practiced in a safe, non-judgmental environment. Methodologies used to present these skills to students are risk assessments, role play, scenario development and other interactive strategies requiring students to be actively involved in their own learning. HIV positive presenters add to the impact of the intervention by sharing their stories and lessons learned with students.

RESULTS: Students are participating extensively in the presentation format demonstrating their proficiency in practicing the necessary and essential skills to remain free of infection with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Both the students and the staff in the schools develop a more sophisticated understanding of the behaviors that may lead to infection. Both presenters and school staff have observed increased participation by students who are normally reluctant in the classroom setting.

CONCLUSIONS: Students and staff express the impact of the program as being powerful, realistic and useful in their lives. The ability to identify risk behaviors and the desire and intention to change to safe and safer behaviors is expressed by all participants. Requests for Positive Voices! Positive Choices! HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Program has increased each school year.

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